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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 21 May 2010 to 20 November 2010 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my last report (S/2010/264) on 28 May 2010, the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1930 (2010). The activities of my mission of good offices in Cyprus are covered separately in my report dated 24 November 2010 (S/2010/603).

2. As at 31 October, the strength of the military component, including all ranks, stood at 859, and the strength of the police component stood at 68 (see annex).

II. Activities of the Force

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and the maintenance of the military status quo

3. During the reporting period, UNFICYP sought to maintain the stability and integrity of the buffer zone, contributing to the overall United Nations effort in support of the peace process. The two opposing forces have cooperated very well in that endeavour and the situation in the buffer zone has remained stable. The relationship between the UNFICYP military chain of command and the chain of command of both opposing forces continues to be good, which is beneficial for maintaining a stable environment on the island.

4. The overall number of military violations committed by the opposing forces during the reporting period has decreased compared with the previous reporting period and has fallen to the lowest level in some years. The opposing forces continue to sporadically employ low-level measures which provoke a reaction from the other side, mostly in the centre of Nicosia. Such incidents appear to be related to ill-discipline rather than a reflection of policy.

5. With regard to the military confidence-building measures proposed by UNFICYP, such as the unmanning and/or closing of observation posts in areas

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where the opposing troops are particularly close to one another, to date the National Guard has worked with UNFICYP on assessing this proposal. As mentioned in my previous report, UNFICYP is still waiting for concrete steps to be taken by the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces in this regard. UNFICYP remains committed to reducing tension and military presence in the area of the buffer zone through the implementation of military confidence-building measures, but this requires support from both sides.

6. No major military exercises have been observed during the reporting period. Low-level exercises continue in line with the normal annual routine. At the beginning of the reporting period, the Turkish Forces conducted a regiment-level exercise near their ceasefire line and the Ayios Dometios/Metehan crossing point to the west of Nicosia. For the third successive year, both the National Guard and the Turkish Forces announced the cancellation of their major annual exercises, "Nikiforos" and "Toros", respectively. This is a welcome development in line with the current efforts to create a climate conducive to the ongoing negotiation process.

7. Positions established, in violation of the status quo, by the opposing forces in the Dherinia area, referred to in my previous reports, remain unchanged. The Turkish Forces retain the checkpoint in the Laroujina pocket. The Turkish Forces have continued regular inspections of the liaison post at Strovilia and repeatedly overmanned the position in violation of the military status quo. The situation in Varosha remains unchanged. The United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

8. During the reporting period, civilians have continued to routinely challenge the authority of UNFICYP within the buffer zone, although the instances of threatening behaviour and physical confrontation with UNFICYP military personnel have decreased. At the same time, UNFICYP procedures for facilitating civilian construction projects in the buffer zone have been increasingly contested. On several occasions, UNFICYP patrol tracks in the buffer zone or access to it have also been blocked by the placement of debris or civilian vehicles.

B. Demining activity in the buffer zone

9. Demining operations continue to make good progress: 70 of 73 minefields released to UNFICYP have been cleared, with more than 25,500 mines removed and 9.5 square kilometres cleared of mines. Of the 13 mined areas released to UNFICYP by the Turkish Forces immediately prior to my last report, 9 of which were inside and 4 outside the buffer zone, 10 have been cleared. Clearance of the remaining fields is scheduled to be completed by the end of December 2010.

10. With the exception of one remaining Turkish Forces minefield south of Varosha and three National Guard minefields in the Laroujina pocket, all minefields within the buffer zone will have been cleared by the end of 2010. If access to the remaining minefields in the buffer zone cannot be secured, or if agreement cannot be reached with the Turkish Forces or the National Guard to extend demining operations to areas outside the buffer zone, United Nations demining operations will likely cease in February 2011.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

11. Cypriots from both sides continued to seek assistance from UNFICYP in addressing day-to-day issues arising from the division of the island, including humanitarian, educational, religious and cultural issues. UNFICYP continues to receive requests relating to issues ranging from the conduct of pilgrimages and other religious observances on both sides and in the buffer zone, and the educational needs of Greek Cypriots in the north and Turkish Cypriots in the south, to the facilitation of medical evacuations and transportation of deceased persons across the buffer zone. UNFICYP routinely facilitates the maintenance of essential infrastructure in the buffer zone, such as roads, waterways and electricity supply, which are used by the population on both sides. It also facilitates the exchange of information between the sides on humanitarian issues, including natural disasters and fires.

12. In a major development, on 14 October a new, seventh, crossing point was opened in the north-west of the island at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak. The opening, which was the culmination of efforts undertaken by both sides over the past two years, was attended by the Greek Cypriot leader, Demetris Christofias, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Derviş Eroğlu, members of local communities and representatives of the European Union and the United States of America, which have provided major funding support. In their statements, both leaders welcomed the opening of the crossing point as a measure which would contribute to the ongoing peace process. They also commended the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its lead role in implementing the project. On 1 November, the leaders agreed to establish an ad hoc joint committee to facilitate the opening of other crossing points.

13. During the reporting period, UNFICYP recorded more than 750,000 official crossings through the buffer zone, including more than 10,000 at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak. During the period between May and October, goods worth approximately €537,731 crossed from the south to the north, and goods worth approximately €3,326,000 crossed in the opposite direction, which is similar to the levels reported for the same period in 2009.

14. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to conduct humanitarian convoys and visits, to 357 Greek Cypriots and 127 Maronites in the north, many of whom are in need of constant medical or in-home care. UNFICYP has encouraged both sides to consider a more systemic response to the needs of this ageing population, which are only growing with each passing year. There have been no new developments regarding the requests of Greek Cypriots and Maronites who seek to return permanently to the north (see S/2010/264, para. 16). UNFICYP continued to facilitate the functioning of the elementary and secondary Greek Cypriot schools in Rizokarpaso, on the Karpas peninsula, through assisting with delivery of school textbooks and the appointment of teachers.

15. UNFICYP also continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining welfare services, including basic, essential services, medical care and education. In Limassol and Paphos, it continued to work with the local authorities and community representatives to strengthen support mechanisms for vulnerable members of the Turkish Cypriot community in educational and social areas. There have been no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish-language primary school in Limassol. In this connection, UNFICYP has suggested that both

sides review their teaching materials with a view to promoting tolerance and understanding of all communities.

16. As the security situation remains unchanged, the pressure to extend civilian activities into areas within the buffer zone remains intense. Support for such activities, while ensuring stability, law and order and the military status quo, remains one of the main challenges facing UNFICYP. During the reporting period, UNFICYP authorized 33 civilian projects out of 54 applications. While UNFICYP seeks to support the return to normal conditions, lack of adherence to UNFICYP procedures regulating civilian activities in the buffer zone by individuals, companies and, occasionally, local authorities, continues to pose challenges for the implementation of the Mission's mandate. UNFICYP has appealed to the relevant authorities on both sides to provide their fullest support to ensuring respect for its authority in this regard.

17. As part of its efforts to support reconciliation between the communities, UNFICYP, in cooperation with international and local partners, facilitated more than 100 bicommunal events, with the participation of more than 5,000 people. The events, including regular meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia, were held at the Ledra Palace Hotel and other locations in the buffer zone.

18. On 4 November, UNFICYP facilitated a visit by the representatives of the political parties participating in the Ledra Palace Hotel forum to two villages on each side of the buffer zone in the copper-mining region of Lefke-Skouriotissa. Among the issues of common concern to the political parties is the environmental impact of past mining activities and ways to redress the situation. The bicommunal forum members were accompanied by members of the Technical Committee on the Environment, established in 2008 by the two sides to discuss and help resolve this and related issues. The initiative may lend momentum to other projects already on the agenda of the Technical Committee.

19. In addition, a variety of bicommunal activities and joint projects have continued to be carried out by UNDP and its local partners, with funding from the European Commission and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The work on the UNDP-supported project proposed by the two Nicosia municipalities under the Nicosia Master Plan for the stabilization of buildings at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing, to which I referred in my previous report (S/2010/264, para. 12), have continued to advance. UNFICYP also continued to support efforts aimed at stabilizing buildings, which have deteriorated over a long period of time and pose a safety hazard, in the buffer zone in central Nicosia.

20. UNFICYP continued to assist in maintaining good relations and building confidence between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone. To that end, UNFICYP continued to monitor the long-standing arrangements established between the two communities in Pyla. UNFICYP worked closely with the local leaders of the two communities and assisted in the management of day-to-day affairs through its regular direct communication and mediation role.

21. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and its advisory board, facilitated by UNFICYP, continued to discuss and plan for the preservation, protection and restoration of immovable cultural heritage throughout the island. The

members of the Committee appointed a bicommunal team of specialists to carry out a preliminary survey related to the restoration of a mosque and a church. UNFICYP continued to facilitate access to sites and icons of religious and cultural significance to either community. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 14 religious and commemorative events which involved crossing the buffer zone in either direction or were held in the buffer zone, with the participation of some 5,650 individuals. Six requests from Greek Cypriots for events in the north were turned down for various reasons, such as the proximity of the event to a military site or the unavailability of the venue owing to its ongoing use, including as a cultural centre or community clinic.

22. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters continued to meet regularly with UNFICYP facilitation. On 29 July, the joint communications room moved to its new dedicated premises in the buffer zone, established with financial support from USAID and UNDP. The joint communications room has been functioning on a daily basis since its establishment in May 2009 to facilitate the timely exchange of information on crime and criminal matters. Since the relocation, there has been a substantial increase in the day-to-day operations of the joint communications room and in the number of follow-up enquiries conducted by both sides, leading to more information being provided and exchanged.

23. UNFICYP continued to foster good working relations with the police services on both sides of the island, which remain cooperative and constructive. This was achieved through daily communication between UNFICYP and the police services from both sides in order to further enhance cooperation and to address operational difficulties within the buffer zone. Following the opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing, United Nations police have assisted in escorting regular convoys transporting Turkish Cypriot civilians and humanitarian supplies through the buffer zone to Kokkina/Erenkoy.

24. From 4 to 6 June, Pope Benedict XVI paid an official visit to Cyprus. Owing to the fact that the Pope stayed at the Catholic church located in the buffer zone in Nicosia, UNFICYP participated in the planning and implementation of the protection operation during the visit.

25. The restrictions imposed upon United Nations staff members of Greek Cypriot origin seeking to undertake their duties in the north, noted in previous reports, continued.

III. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

26. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons continued to pursue its bicommunal project on the exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing persons. By November 2010, the remains of nearly 700 individuals had been exhumed on both sides of the buffer zone by the Committee's bicommunal teams of archaeologists. The remains of over 400 missing persons had undergone examination at the Committee's bicommunal anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. Following DNA genetic analysis of 1,233 samples, carried out by a bicommunal team of scientists at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, the remains of 263 individuals, including those of 36 individuals over the reporting period alone, have been returned to their respective families. During the reporting period, the Committee

was able to conduct only a limited number of exhumations in the military areas in the north.

IV. Financial and administrative aspects

27. The General Assembly, by its resolution 64/274 of 24 June 2010, appropriated the amount of $56.3 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $17.9 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to do likewise, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

28. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

29. As at 31 October 2010, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 31 October 2010 amounted to $15.1 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2,919.5 million.

30. Reimbursement of troop- and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 August 2010 and 30 June 2010, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

V. Observations

31. During the reporting period, the situation in the buffer zone remained calm and relations between UNFICYP and the opposing forces remained good and cooperative. The overall number of violations has declined. Low-level exercises near the ceasefire lines unnecessarily cause tensions and should be avoided. I hope that discussions on military confidence-building measures initiated by UNFICYP will enjoy the support and cooperation of both opposing forces and produce tangible results. Such a development would provide the best possible backdrop to the ongoing negotiations.

32. Regrettably, restrictions on the movement of locally employed United Nations civilian personnel continue. Freedom of movement for all United Nations personnel is a matter of principle for the Organization and an operational requirement for UNFICYP, and I call on the Turkish Cypriot authorities to respect that principle.

33. The UNFICYP mandate to contribute to the restoration of normal conditions entails the facilitation of an increasingly wide range of civilian activities. As documented above, both communities have continued to rely on UNFICYP assistance in areas ranging from humanitarian, social and economic matters to a variety of bicommunal issues affecting the everyday lives of Cypriots. UNFICYP continued to work closely with the two communities in resolving practical day-to-day issues, including the civilian use of the buffer zone. Such efforts are important in building confidence and positive relations between the communities, and I call on both sides to continue to support UNFICYP in that regard.

34. UNFICYP has been instrumental in facilitating cooperation between the sides in the field of cultural heritage and crime and criminal matters, including in the implementation of concrete measures agreed in the respective Technical Committees. In the area of cultural heritage, it is important that all parties lend their full support to the implementation of agreed measures aimed at preserving the rich common cultural heritage of Cyprus. With regard to crime and criminal matters, I welcome the increase in the exchange of information between the two sides, not only as a reflection of a growing mutual trust but also as a significant contribution towards producing tangible results for the common security of all Cypriots.

35. I commend the leaders, Mr. Christofias and Mr. Eroğlu, for the opening of the new crossing point at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak. This important and long-awaited development is a tangible confidence-building measure and will improve the daily lives of many Cypriots. The creation of a joint committee to consider the establishment of other crossing points is a welcome sign of political will to bring the communities closer together. It is important that efforts in this direction be pragmatic and results-oriented, with a view to enabling further social and economic interaction between the two sides.

36. I remain of the view that the establishment of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts will have a positive impact on the ongoing negotiations. Such contacts nurture a sentiment of trust between the communities and help address the concerns of isolation expressed by the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, greater economic and social parity between the sides will make the eventual reunification not only easier but also more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counterproductive.

37. I am pleased to report that the humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons continues largely unhindered. I urge all parties concerned to continue all efforts to prevent the work of the Committee from being politicized. Complete access to military areas in the north for the purposes of exhumation remains crucial. I urge the Turkish Forces to adopt a more forthcoming approach, given the humanitarian dimension of the issue.

38. The demining in the buffer zone, which has continued apace and is now nearing completion, is at a critical juncture. Access to the last four mined areas in the buffer zone has not yet been granted by the National Guard or the Turkish Forces. I call upon the parties to release those areas so that a mine-free buffer zone may be delivered for all Cypriots within the time frame of the current project. The United Nations stands ready to further assist the parties in their aspiration to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.

39. It is my firm belief that UNFICYP continues to play an important role on the island, all the more so at this sensitive juncture of the talks. The Mission works closely with the Office of my Special Adviser and other United Nations agencies and programmes which are actively engaged in promoting an atmosphere conducive to the negotiations. I recommend, therefore, that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 15 June 2011.

40. In line with the Security Council's requests, most recently in its resolution 1930 (2010), the Secretariat will remain engaged in contingency planning in relation to the settlement. The planning will continue in a flexible manner and will be guided

by developments in the negotiations and the views of the parties on the possible role of the United Nations in this respect.

41. At the same time, mindful of the Council's previous calls and my stated intention to keep all peacekeeping operations under review, I shall continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and shall revert to the Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted. Furthermore, as I informed the Council in my report dated 24 November 2010 (S/2010/603), I plan, in the coming months, to conduct a broader assessment of the United Nations presence in Cyprus, with a view to recommending ways to further adjust to ongoing developments.

42. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to my newly appointed Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, the Force Commander, Rear Admiral Mario César Sánchez Debernardi, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

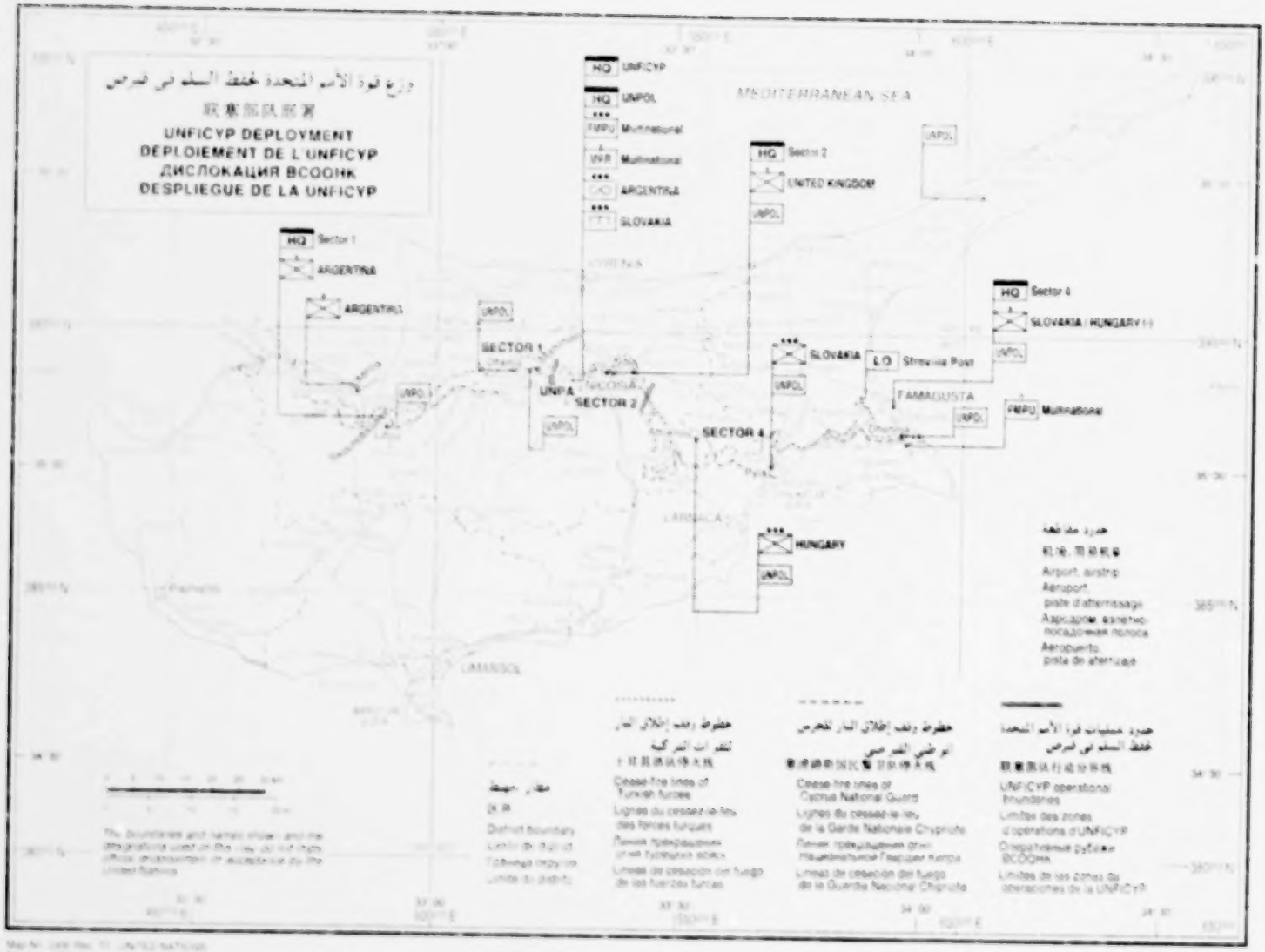
Annex

Countries providing military and civilian police personnel to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (as at 31 October 2010)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	297
Austria	4
Canada	1
Hungary[b]	84
Peru[c]	2
Slovakia[d]	200
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	271
Total	**859**

	United Nations police
Australia	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
Croatia	4
El Salvador	8
India	7
Ireland	18
Italy	3
Montenegro	2
Netherlands	4
Ukraine	4
Total	**68**

[a] The Argentine contingent includes soldiers from Chile (15), Paraguay (14) and Brazil (1).
[b] The Hungarian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (7).
[c] Peru is using one vacant British post in UNFICYP headquarters.
[d] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Croatia (2).



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